

ALBANY, GA. Franklin A. "Frank" Spooner, 49, of Albany, who assisted thousands of people throughout a widespread area of Southwest Georgia as a "case worker" on the Second Congressional District staff of U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop for nearly seven years, died Tuesday (10/27) after a long illness.

A memorial service will be held Monday at 10:00 a.m. at Kimbrell-Stern Funeral Directors, located at 1503 Dawson Road, Albany. Visitation with the family will be held afterward.

In a statement, Representative Bishop said:

"As both an unforgettable friend and a colleague I have leaned upon for many years, I have never known a more able, committed, compassionate, courageous, generous or uplifting person to be around than Frank Spooner.

"Frank wore a remarkably diverse number of professional hats during his life, including that of a journalist, a businessman, a social worker, and finally as a key team member on our Congressional staff. That broad range of experience must have prepared him well. From the very beginning, he was extraordinarily effective in our office's efforts to help others. When Frank joined the Second District staff back in 1996, he was already battling a life-threatening health condition. His condition would grow more severe over the years. But even when eventually confronted with an untreatable prognosis, he kept working as often and as hard as he could, always reaching out to help others.

"Although he was successful in resolving many cases, he always gave credit to those who served with him. Although he experienced many difficult days as a result of ill health, his sharp sense of humor and friendly and supportive presence remained a morale booster for the whole office. Most of all, whenever someone called or came through our door for help, he stood ready to provide the understanding, accessible, knowledgeable, and determined advocacy that characterized his service to the people of the Second Congressional District.

"There are people from throughout our area of Georgia who loved Frank Spooner for the crucial assistance he provided on their behalf and on behalf of their families. All of us who had the privilege of knowing and working with Frank loved him, and are deeply saddened by his loss. My thoughts and prayers go out to Frank's family."

Mr. Spooner was born in Macon and was raised in Fort Gaines. He attended Mercer University. Before joining the Second District Congressional office, he worked as a feature writer for The Albany Herald, manager of jewelry stores and motels in several cities, and turned a hobby into a job by working in a baseball card shop and later as the operator of his own baseball card business. He served with Emaus House, an Episcopal Mission in Atlanta that ran a poverty rights office, and with Helpline of Albany.

At an early age, he was diagnosed with a congenital kidney problem that eventually led to a kidney transplant at the age of 23. When the transplanted kidney failed some years later, he underwent regular kidney dialysis. Several years ago, he was diagnosed with cancer. The cancer eventually proved to be inoperable.

He is survived by his mother, Mrs. Della Spooner Bell of Albany; a brother, Robert A. McKay (Juline) of Bushnell, Florida; an uncle, R.S. Spooner of Donalsonville, and a number of nieces, nephews and cousins.